

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the following claims as indicated. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Original) Climatic device comprising a working space (2) and an equipment space (3), connected thereto via at least one connection opening (5), with a heat exchanger (4) arranged therein, characterized by the fact

that a blocking device (6, 6') is provided with which the exchange of gas between the working space (2) and the equipment space (3) via the connection opening (5) can be selectively suppressed, wherein there is at least one such connection opening.

2. (Original) Climatic device in accordance with Claim 1, characterized by the fact

that the blocking device (6) is a device for forming a gas curtain (7) transversely to the connection opening (5), wherein there is at least one such connection opening.

3. (Original) Climatic device in accordance with Claim 2, characterized by the fact

that the device for forming a gas curtain (7) comprises at least one gas blower opening (8), and preferably several gas blower openings.

4. (Currently amended) Climatic device in accordance with Claim 2 ~~or 3~~, characterized by the fact

that at least one gas blower opening (8) is arranged in the region of the entrance of the connection opening (5), this entrance being on the side where the equipment space is located and there being at least one such gas blower opening.

5. (Currently amended) Climatic device in accordance with ~~Claims 2, 3, or 4~~ Claim 2, characterized by the fact

that at least one gas blower opening (8) is arranged in the region inside the connection opening (5) and, in particular, in one of the connection opening walls (5a, 5b) that define the connection opening (5).

6. (Original) Climatic device in accordance with Claim 5, characterized by the fact

that gas blower openings (8) are present in the region of several connection opening walls (5a, 5b), especially those located opposite one another, or in the region of all such connection opening walls.

7. (Currently amended) Climatic device in accordance with Claim ~~5 or 6~~, characterized by the fact

that the connection opening (5) is surrounded by a gas collection chamber (17) at least in those regions into which the gas blower openings (8) issue, wherein this gas collection chamber communicates with the gas blower openings (8) and is connected to a gas supply line.

8. (Currently amended) Climatic device in accordance with ~~Claims 3, 4, or 5~~ Claim 3, characterized by the fact

that the gas blower openings (8) are configured in the form of openings in the wall of a gas supply line (9).

9. (Original) Climatic device in accordance with Claim 8, characterized by the fact that a gas supply line (9) is arranged along at least one side of the connection opening (5).

10. (Original) Climatic device in accordance with Claim 9, characterized by the fact that a gas supply line surrounds the connection opening (5) at least once.

11. (Currently amended) Climatic device in accordance with ~~one of the Claims 3 through 10~~ Claim 3, characterized by the fact

that several rows of gas blower openings are arranged one above another.

12. (Currently amended) Climatic device in accordance with ~~one of the Claims 3 through 11~~ Claim 3, characterized by the fact

that at least some of the gas blower openings are aligned obliquely in the direction of the equipment space (3).

13. (Currently amended) Climatic device in accordance with ~~one of the Claims 1 through 12~~ Claim 1, characterized by the fact

that the gas (7') is an essentially anhydrous gas and/or an inert gas, especially nitrogen.

14. (Original) Climatic device in accordance with Claim 1, characterized by the fact

that the blocking device (6') is a mechanical seal, especially a flap and preferably a self-closing flap, or a sliding valve (10).

15. (Original) Climatic device in accordance with Claim 14, characterized by the fact

that the mechanical seal is a sliding valve (10) that is arranged in the working space (2) and can be actuated by a transport system (15) that is located in the working space (2).

16. (Original) Climatic device in accordance with Claim 14, characterized by the fact

that at least two connection openings (5) are present that are capable of being sealed by means of flaps (18, 19), wherein one of the flaps (18) opens toward the equipment space (3) and the other flap (19) opens toward the working space (2).

17. (Original) Climatic device in accordance with Claim 14, characterized by the fact

that the mechanical seal is capable of being actuated by means of a motorized drive system or electromagnetically.

18. (Currently amended) Climatic device in accordance with ~~one of the Claims 14 through 17~~ Claim 14, characterized by the fact

that the mechanical seal is thermally insulated relative to the working space (2) and/or the equipment space (3), and that it made from a material with low thermal conductivity or is heatable.

19. (Currently amended) Climatic device in accordance with ~~one of the Claims 1 through 18~~ Claim 1, characterized by the fact

that a control device is provided that is configured such that the actuation of the blocking device (6, 6') is coupled to the operating state of the heat exchanger (4) and/or to the temperature in the equipment space (3).

20. (Currently amended) Process for the operation of a climatic device in accordance with ~~one of Claims 1 through 19~~ Claim 1, characterized by the fact

that the control device actuates the blocking device (6, 6') and interrupts the operation of the heat exchanger (4) at the same time as the activation of the blocking device (6, 6'), or after the activation thereof.

21. (Original) Process in accordance with Claim 20, characterized by the fact

that the blocking device (6, 6') is de-activated when the heat exchanger (4) is re-activated.

22. (Original) Process in accordance with Claim 20, characterized by the fact

that the blocking device (6, 6') is a device for forming a gas curtain (7) whose operation is not interrupted after the heat exchanger (4) is actuated.